

Reviews

TEXTBOOKS OF HAEMATOLOGY

Clinical Hematology. By Maxwell M. Wintrobe, M.D. (Pp. 792; illustrated. 45s.) London: Henry Kimpton. 1942.

Disorders of the Blood: Diagnosis, Pathology, Treatment and Technique. By Lionel E. H. Whitby, M.D., F.R.C.P., and C. J. C. Britton, M.D. Fourth edition. Churchill's Empire Series. (Pp. 595; illustrated. 28s.) London: J. and A. Churchill. 1942.

Blood Disorders in Children. By I. Newton Kugelmass, M.D. (Pp. 897; illustrated. 60s.) London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press. 1942.

The advances made in haematology in the interval between the two wars have stimulated the production of a number of new textbooks. Wintrobe's *Clinical Hematology* is the latest and most complete of these and the one most likely to succeed to the position left vacant by the death of Naegeli. It has the same wealth of physiological and technical detail, the same breadth of treatment, and an even better bibliography. In fact some 2,400 references are made in the text, so that it is easy to find chapter and verse for almost any statement. At the same time, perhaps as a corollary of this deference to the literature, we miss the personal touches which made Naegeli's *Blutkrankheiten* so attractive. An account of the origin and development of the cells of the blood is followed by descriptions of the erythrocytes and leucocytes, and the platelets and coagulation mechanism. The author then discusses general physical and chemical considerations of the blood as a whole and the principles and technique of blood examination. This is a subject to which he has made notable contributions, and indeed the Wintrobe system of blood examination is standard practice in many laboratories in this country. After a general consideration of anaemia and its treatment Wintrobe proceeds to a clinical account of the various blood disorders. It is not possible to criticize a book of this kind fairly without seeing how it stands up to the test of being used in practice over a period of several months. Nevertheless we should conclude provisionally that it is the most exact and comprehensive handbook of diseases of the blood available in English. It is well illustrated, with seven coloured plates and a large number of clinical photographs and diagrams. All this is not to say that it could not be improved. British readers will feel that the space allotted to blood transfusion and the treatment of haemorrhage is far too small. The signal advances made in this field have been largely the work of haematologists, and it is essential that they should be adequately reported in textbooks of haematology. The clinical grouping of the various blood diseases is capricious. The index is not full enough; it is, indeed, grossly misleading as to the contents of the book. The casual reader or the student in the library can hardly be expected to realize that many subjects are dealt with both in the physiological and in the clinical sections and that there is not a great deal of duplication.

Whitby and Britton's *Disorders of the Blood* has won its way to a fourth edition. The publication of this after three years of war—and in spite of the blockade, the paper restrictions, and the manifold preoccupations of the authors—is in itself a triumph. The book has the same format as Harrison's *Chemical Methods in Clinical Medicine* and deserves an equally honoured place on the laboratory or consulting-room shelf. With 8 excellent coloured plates and nearly 600 pages of text for 28s. it is undoubtedly the best bargain in the department of haematological textbooks. It is not quite so detailed as Wintrobe, but contains as much as the average physician or clinical pathologist needs to know about the blood. The text follows orthodox lines in dealing with the physiology and the disorders of the blood, with an appendix on technique. The arrangement of the clinical sections is to our mind apter and more logical than Wintrobe's. New material in this edition concerns especially the blood pigments, haemorrhagic states, haemolytic anaemias of the newborn, and transfusion. The section on purpuric and haemorrhagic diseases is still the least satisfactory and will probably offer great difficulties to the beginner. It is unfortunate that textbooks do not give figures for the actual frequency of different haemorrhagic states or stress the predominance of the symptomatic ones. It is probably easier for the student also if all the hereditary

tendencies to bleed are grouped together. Ligation of the splenic artery hardly deserves mention as a treatment for essential thrombocytopenia. The description of the estimation of prothrombin suggests unfamiliarity with the technique and contains at least one serious error. It is much easier to dry rabbit brain than human brain, and it is in fact very difficult to get a 'stable dry extract of human brain without using acetone; human brain is best used as a fresh emulsion. Hobson and Witts recommended adding lecithin to snake-venom, not to brain extract, which already contains an excess of the lecithin factor.

Blood Disorders in Children has nearly 1,000 pages and costs £3. Both figures seem excessive and are explained by the fact that it is stuffed with irrelevancies. A reader does not go to a book on disorders of the blood in childhood for details of how to do a white blood count or for diagrams of retention enemata or of fluid feeding by stomach tube. Dr. Kugelmass may like to take photographs of female technicians looking down quite ordinary colorimeters, but we see no reason why he should insert them in a book intended for public purchase. What the blood is like in psittacosis and Oroya fever also has nothing to do with the case. It is not merely that the irrelevancies swell the size and cost of the book; they distort the perspective. Under leukaemia accounts are given of eosinophilic leukaemia, basophilic leukaemia, megakaryocytic leukaemia, erythroleukaemia, and myelomatosis, all of which are excessively rare or do not occur at all in childhood, whereas the account of leukaemia as it actually occurs in childhood is in our opinion poor. The untutored reader might well get the opinion that polycythaemia vera was a common familial disease in children. He will see some quite unnecessary pictures of gloved hands inserting large needles into distended antecubital veins, but will learn nothing of the special tricks and techniques which have been devised for inserting blood via fine needles or catheters into small collapsed veins in infancy. All this is not to say that Dr. Kugelmass's book does not contain many pretty things. The quotations from the poets are apt and the historical notes are pleasant. But selection and compression are essential in scientific publications, and not a style which recalls James Joyce and the family scrapbook. This is a pity, because Dr. Kugelmass is a haematologist of experience. A good monograph on the special haematology of childhood is badly wanted, but Dr. Kugelmass must reduce his book to a quarter the size and price, and tell us more about blood disorders in childhood, before he can hope to fill the gap.

The supply of textbooks of general haematology now exceeds the demand and we must leave them for natural selection and the survival of the fittest. Again and again in reviewing these textbooks we have been struck by the necessity under which authors seem to feel to give long descriptions of the cytology and physiology of the blood. No other branch of medicine seems to demand so much repetition of normal anatomy and physiology. We have spoken before of the need for a cheap international atlas of haematology, and there seems to be equal need for a standard monograph on the physiology of the blood, to prevent all this duplication. Technique is already extremely well described by Regena Beck, whose *Laboratory Manual of Hematologic Technic* is perhaps not as well known as it deserves to be. It is worth pointing out again that the outstanding writings of the new haematology have all been monographs—Janet Vaughan's *Anaemias*, Claude Forkner's *Leukaemia*, and Engelbreth-Holm's *Leukaemia in Animals*. These have not been overloaded with physiology or technique or pictorial art, and we could do with still more precise monographs of the same type.

OBSTETRICS AND GYNAECOLOGY

Recent Advances in Obstetrics and Gynaecology. By Aleck W. Bourne, M.B., B.Ch., F.R.C.S., F.R.C.O.G., and Leslie H. Williams, M.D., M.S., F.R.C.S., F.R.C.O.G. Fifth edition. (Pp. 363; illustrated. 18s.) London: J. and A. Churchill. 1942.

One might be forgiven for wondering if there have been enough recent additions to our knowledge of obstetrics and gynaecology to warrant the publication of a fifth edition at this stage of the war. It is true that the book contains very little that is new since its predecessor was published in 1939, but it is equally true that this 1942 edition is a good one. Much that could no longer be described as recent advances